REASONS
AGAINST
A CLAUSE in the BILL,
ENTITULED,
An Act for the preventing the Exportation of WOOLL, &c. and for the better Regulating of the FACTORS in *Blackwell-Hall.*

Bill, fo. 11. The Clauſe,

And be it further Enacted, That if any Perſon or Perſons called or known by name of Blackwell-Hall *Factor or Factors, acting in the Sale of Cloth in the ſaid Hall, ſhall hereafter be concerned in the Buying or Selling of Wooll, by himſelf or Agents, upon information thereof from time to time to the Governors of the ſaid Hall, ſuch Factor or Factors ſo offending, ſhall forfeit* 5 l. *for every Bag of Wooll ſo bought or ſold,* &c.

THIS Clauſe is proſecuted by a very few of the rich deſigning Clothiers, to ruin the midling and ſmall Clothiers (who are the more numerous ten to one) which cannot be effected, without firſt deſtroying the Factors that do ſupport them, by Credit and Advance both of Money and Wooll before ſale of their Cloths; To which purpoſe the Proſecutors brought in a Bill laſt Seſſions of Parliament, totally to prohibit the Factors from trading at all, which was rejected. Now this Clauſe is intended by degrees and conſequence, to accompliſh the ſame purpoſe.

I. This Clauſe is againſt Common Right. Every Engliſhman, and eſpecially every Freeman of *London*, having a right to buy and ſell what Commodities he thinks fit, and to deal with whom he pleaſeth; which Right ought not to be taken away, or abridged by general accuſation to the prejudice of any Engliſhman, or Freeman, much leſs of a Body of conſiderable Traders, without due proof of Miſfeazance or Forfeiture of ſuch Right, or of a general Inconvenience in the further uſe of it; neither of which have, or can be proved in this Caſe.

II. The Pretence of this Clauſe is, The Benefit of the Clothiers of *England*, who indeed beſt underſtand, and are the moſt competent Judges of their own Intereſt. And if it be their Advantage, will refuſe to buy Wooll of the Factor, (without Aid of an Act of Parliament) they being now abſolutely free to buy or not of the Factor, as they pleaſe, and are not under any manner of Neceſſity, but at their own free Election; ſo that it is thought unreaſonable to make a Law to prohibit that, which is already in the power of the Clothier himſelf (as his Intereſt leads him) to do or not to do.

And as the Clothier is now free, ſo the greateſt part of them, by their Petition, pray they may be left free to buy of whom they ſhall think fit, they themſelves alledging the ſaid Clauſe will be very prejudicial to them, if paſſed: The ſeveral Petitions of the Clothiers from the ſeveral Clothing Counties of *England* ſufficiently juſtify this.

III. If this Clauſe paſs, it will oblige the Factor to draw out his Stock from the Clothier's Credit (which is very conſiderable,) and will leave the midling and ſmall Clothier without means to ſubſiſt, or Money to carry on his Trade; which they now do in great meaſure, by the Wooll and Monies the Factors advance upon the Credit of their Cloth upon hand unſold (without Conſideration;) which if the Factor ſhould withdraw, the Clothier muſt ſtand ſtill until his Goods are ſold, and Money received, and in the mean time the poor Work-people muſt ſtarve, or come to the Pariſh: and the Conſequence of that, will neceſſarily be the Leſſening and Decay of the Woollen Manufacture, inſtead of the Advance thereof, as the Act intends.

IV. This Clauſe is againſt the Opinion, Prayer and Intereſt of the Merchant Importer of Wooll, who, if it paſs, muſt turn Retailers, or be forced to Export the greateſt part of the Wooll they Import, to *Holland*, &c. moſt of the Clothiers having occaſion but for ſmall Parcels, and the Merchant being a Stranger to the Clothier, and his Circumſtances, will not, nor can in reaſon ſell to them, without preſent Money or Security, which the Clothier will not be able to pay or give; and that will be a means to hinder the Importation of Wooll, and a great Detriment to the Clothing of the Nation.

V. The great Objection againſt the Factors is, That they Ingroſs all the Wooll that comes, and thereby the Clothier is forced to buy of them at Advanced Prices.

Anſwer. All the Factors of *Blackwell-Hall* are not able to buy the Third part of the Wooll Imported at the Port of *London* only, and great Quantities are Imported at *Exon, Briſtol*, and other places; Therefore they cannot Ingroſs the Commodity: Beſides, if they could, the Clothier is not bound to buy of his own Factor, but (as they now uſually do) buy of another, if he think another more indifferent, and will uſe him better. And there was always (time out of mind) Perſons concerned, in buying and ſelling of Wooll between the Merchant and Clothier, and who (as every Body knows that knows the Trade) ſold to the Clothier at greater Advanced Prices than any of the Factors ever did.

VI. The Selling to their Principals the Commodities they uſe, is practiſed by all other Factors, as the *Canterbury* and *Norwich* Factors ſend to their Weavers their Silk; and thoſe that deal in Fuſtians from *Lancaſhire*, do furniſh their Weavers from *London* with Cotton, Wooll, and Linnen Yarn.

So that this Clauſe being proſecuted by a very few Clothiers, (who are only able to buy of the Merchants, and thereby hope to have the ſole Selling of Wooll by Retail to the other Clothiers) which is to make the greateſt part ſubject to a few Rich men of the ſame Trade; and if it paſs, will be the Ruin of the greateſt part of the Clothiers, who cannot afford to advance Money, nor have Credit with the Merchant, is a plain Deſign in the Proſecutors to Ingroſs the whole Clothing Trade to themſelves, and deſtroy all the midling and ſmall Clothiers: when as the Woollen Manufacture will be moſt advanced by remaining in many hands, and left as formerly, and thereby Thouſands of Poor will be preſerved from Beggary and Want.

Since therefore the Clauſe is againſt the Prayer of, and very prejudicial to all the ſaid Factors, and Merchant-Importers, and greateſt part of the Clothiers, and conſequently fatally Injurious to the Woollen Manufacture of the Nation, It is hoped the ſaid Clauſe ſhall be rejected.

THE

Blackwell-Hall Factors

CASE

Relating to the BILL for preventing the Exportation of WOOLL, *&c.* And Regulating the *Blackwell-Hall* Factors.